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Notes on, and Translation of, two Copper-plate Inscriptions from Bámanghāti.—*By* Babu Prata'pachandra Ghosha, B. A., Assistant Secretary, Asiatic Society, Bengal.

[With two plates.]

In March last Mr. Wood-Mason, Assistant Curator, Indian Museum, handed me two copper tablets bearing inscriptions. These, he said, had been found buried in the ground, and were forwarded to him by a gentleman of Chaibása, Singbhúm. The plates, when I received them, were so much covered with rust and mud, that I could entertain little hope of ever being able to decipher them. Immersion in cocoa-nut oil, however, seemed considerably to improve the appearance of the tablets, and in May last I took out the plates and had them well rubbed over with a brush, so as to remove all rust. This I succeeded in doing with the help of two weak vegetable acids, tamarind and lime juice. The inscriptions on the tablets after this operation appeared to be legible, but still at places they were so deeply eaten into as to necessitate my using a blunt knife, to remove the scaly rust which stuck to them with some degree of adhesion, but to little advantage, and after several attempts at cleaning the tablets, I gave up the idea of being able to do anything with them. In July, however, it struck me that dilute sulphuric acid, if judiciously

applied, might help me in removing the last adhering scales of oxide and dust. This was accordingly done, but as the bath used was a weak one, it took some days before the process appeared to have any effect. As the plates now are, they are very clear, except at three or four places, which look blotched, but those defects did not interfere with the decyphering of the inscriptions.

The tablets are each surmounted by a round seal with a high undulating rim so formed as to resemble roughly a full blown lotus. The seals appear to have been forged with the tablets, after the latter had been completed, and the convexity of the back of the seal indicates that they had been separately attached to a holder, though the circumstance of the characters of the legend not being reversed, as usual in a seal, seems to be opposed to such a supposition. The tablets are inscribed on both sides commencing from the left corner of the top with the legend of the seal upwards. A portion of the first line of each inscription has been covered by the rim of the seal, but the position of the seals on the two tablets being slightly different and the inscriptions on the two being almost identical, the portion covered in one has been left apparent in the other.

The character is the Devanágari of the twelfth century, but is allied to the *Gauḍiya* rather than to the *Kutila* type. It is curious to observe, however, that in both the plates certain very ancient forms have been retained. Thus ह, ध, भ, ढ, ड़, उ and श have retained their ancient forms, and especially the ह, ध and ड़, while such letters as स, ल, य, म, प and ख are scarcely distinguishable from their Bengali equivalents of the last century. The vowel signs are identical with those of the Bengali alphabet, though slight modifications are observable in the signs of उ and ऊ, which are like the Bengali sign of ऋ. The Bengali of व, त, ङ, ज, ञ and र may be traced to the forms engraved on these tablets. Modern compound consonants, such as क्ष, ज्ञ, त्व and ख्य, are not visible in those inscriptions; they are written as क्‌ष, ज्‌ञ, त्‌व, ख्‌य. The ञ attached to the compound ज्‌ञ is like that of the Bengali. The forms of भ, घ श and य (?) are most peculiar, being nothing like *Gauḍiya* or *Kutila* types, but are more likened to the crude forms of the Páli. The भ and घ the ल and श (at certain places), the भ, रु and ध, and the त and न are so very like one another, that nothing but a thorough

understanding of the purport of the text could help any one to determine which is which. Indeed the difference is so very minute and almost evanescent, that in my first reading I had rendered a passage आराधनच्च पिह पाद्; instead of आराधन चयित पापः, which latter reading alone makes any sense. · The compound न्व is expressed at two places in two different ways; thus at some it is न्य, and at others is न्न. It is interesting to note that the Bengali compound ত of त् and उ is to be observed in these inscriptions as स्तु. In one of the tablets, the latter one, the compound च्च has been greatly modified, and the compound has approached the form of क्ष, more than that of the Devanágari च्च. On the whole, from the forms of the letters occurring in the inscriptions, one is led to suppose that the inscriptions are more Bengali than anything else, and that they contain forms to which the Bengali alphabets may be traced. It was ere long a puzzle to many a palæographist to explain how such Bengali forms of alphabets as খ, ত, থ, and প, originated; but these records help to solve the difficulty.

The language is Sanskrit, and the metre of the s'lokas which now and then turn up, is *anustupa*, except the last couplets, which are in the long distich metre. The grammar on the whole is correct, but errors and omissions, committed by the engraver, are in the later plate specially, numerous and frequent. The style of the composition as well as the phrases are quite modern, and this fact alone ought to warn us against identifying the Samvat of S'rí Raṇabhanja Deva's inscription with that of Vikramáditya.

The inscriptions record the grant of several villages by two princes (father and son) of the same family. They open with the usual salutation, in which S'iva is invoked to bless the donors. The names of the ancestors of the donors follow with eulogies, and then come the names of the donors. The donee's name and the names of the villages given away, and the rights thereto attached, and the privileges accruing therefrom, are next mentioned. Imprecations are fulminated against the resumption by succeeding princes of the villages, and the records close with the usual quotations from the Dharma Sástras, in which the donors of lands are praised and those who resume lands given by others are condemned as vile sinners.

The tablets record grants by the princes of the Bhanja family, perhaps of the Mayurabhanja dynasty of the Kaṭak Tributary Mahals. The names of the donors are S'rí Raṇabhanja Deva and S'rí Rájabhanja Deva, the latter being the son of the former. One of the inscriptions bears a date, but the figures are so unclear as to leave us entirely in the dark. It looks like 65 Samvat, and this Samvat, without doubt, is an era peculiar to the family, quite distinct from the Samvat of Vikramáditya of Ujjayiní. The founder of the dynasty of the Bhanjas was one Virabhadra, and if my conjecture about the relation of the Bhanjas to Mayurabhanja be correct, his descendants are perhaps still extant, and the villages they bestowed, may be identified with existing places. The names of the princes recorded in the inscriptions are—

Vírabhadra (founder of the dynasty)
|
S'rí Koṭhyabhanja
|
S'rí Digbhanja (?)
|
S'rí Raṇabhanja Deva
|
S'rí Rajabhanja Deva

Vírabhadra, the founder of the dynasty is stated to have founded several hermitages, and from the fact of a hundred millions of hermitages being in the place, it is in the inscriptions named *Kottya*, or a hundred million.

This also appears to have been the name of a prince that followed Virábhadra. In the translation appended, Digbhanja is rendered as a surname of S'rí Raṇabhanja Deva. The passage in the inscriptions is so very ambiguous, that for the correct rendering of the same we must wait till the legends of the Mayurbhanja family are obtained. That the Bhanja dynasty of these grants are identical with the Mayura-bhanja dynasty is further evident from the unexplained passage in both the tablets मयूराण्डं भित्वा । "having broken a pea-hen's egg," and also from names of the villages. Bráhmanavasatí is undoubtedly the ancient form of the Bamanghatty of our maps, an important village in the Mayurabhanja

estate. The villages Korandiyá, Devakunda, Timandirá, Koṅkola, Jambupadraka, Prasanná, of Sri Ranabhanja Deva's grant are in name evidently Uria. Again, the title of the donees in both inscriptions is Uria. The donee of Rájabhanja's deed of gift is Buddha Sámanta, son of Mundi Sámanta, and that of Ranabhanja is Badhaka, son of Mundi Sámanta. That the donees are of the identical family does not admit of doubt, and there are strong reasons to suppose that they are the same individuals. Buddha and Bodháka might be different rendering by the engravers, of the same name. In the translation, nevertheless, Sámanta has been rendered as 'generalissimo,' and the reason of my so doing is, that in the absence of any legend or tradition to the contrary, I think it better to give a literal rendering of the inscription than to mislead the reader by what I believe to be a mere guess.

The tablet bearing Ranabhanja's grant measures 8½ inches by 7 inches, and the diameter of the seal attached to it, is over 3 inches. On referring to the plates, it will appear that it is the better executed engraving of the two. Indeed, the other tablet is a copy,—a rough and hasty one—of this. In the seal is the figure of a bull, the Nandi, surmounted by a crescent moon and standing before a trident. The name of the prince "S'rí Ranabhanja Deva's" श्रीरणभञ्ज देवस्य occurs next in one line extending over the entire diameter of the seal, and the exergue bears a little less than a half lotus. The inscription, transliterated in Devanágarí character, stands thus :

श्रीरणभञ्जदेवस्य ।

स्वस्ति । सकलभुवनैकनाथो भवभयभिदुरो भवो भवानीशः वि-
विधसम धि वधिज्ञः सर्व्वज्ञोवः शिवायास्तुः । आसीत्कोट्याश्रम महा-
तपोवनाधिष्ठानें मायुराण्डं (?) भीत्वाशूलदण्ड वीरभद्राख्यः प्रतिपक्ष
निधनदक्षो वशीष्ठमुनिपालितो नृपतिः ॥ तस्यादि भञ्जवङ्शे रिपुवन
दावानलः ख्यातः शूरः शुधि(चि?)र्व्विनोतोज(ा?)तः श्रीकोट्य ? भञ्जना-
माख्यः पुत्रस्तदानुरूपश्रेष्ठः श्रीमानशक्त(असंख्य?) सामन्त नृपति,शता-
र्च्चितचरणो श्रीदिग्भञ्जोज(य?)श अन्वितः । तस्यात्मजः स्मर समो वल-
वाम्बरिष्ठःशूरःसमुन्यत(समुन्नत?)यसा(शा?)प्रविजित्य शत्रुं राजायुधि-

ष्ठिरस्विावनिपालने च-।नित्यं रतः कुशल कर्म्मविधौ प्रशक्तः खिञ्जिदंश? कोच्च?वासी हरचणा(चरणा?)राधनच्चयितपापः श्रीमा(न्?)रणभञ्ज-देवः। सानुनयप्राहः भूःपालके खिञ्जिदंश? प्रतिवद्धो उत्तरखण्डस्या-न्तःपाती कोरन्दि?(ण्डि?)या नाम्ना विषयः तथा देवकुण्डविषयसम्बन्धः तिमण्डिराग्रामः कोङ्कोलाग्रामः जम्बुपद्रकग्रामः प्रसन्नाग्रामाभिधेता-न्नेपिग्रामाणा अयं पूर्व्वं विदित चतुःसीमापर्यन्ता-? मचा (वा?) भट्ट? प्रवेशो आकरी कृत्य? महासामन्त मुण्डीसुतः वट्टा(वढ़ा?)कस्य विद्येयी? दत्ता?(दृष्ट्वा?) शासनीकृत्य प्रदत्तोहं यावत्प्रि(त्पू?)थ्वी धम्मदात्तिर्थ्य लोकालोवा? तावत् काल पालनीयौ भवद्भिः उक्तञ्च धर्म्मशास्त्रे वहुभि-र्व्वसुधादत्ता राजभिः सगरादिभि र्यस्य यस्य यदा भूमीं तस्य तस्य तस्य तदफल माभुतः फलशङ्कावः परदत्तेति पार्थिवा। स्वदत्ता(त्) फलमानन्तपरदत्तानुपालने स्वदत्तापरदत्ताम्बा यो हरेद्वसुन्धरां सवि-ष्टायां कृमी भुत्वा पितृभिः सहपच्यते॥ अपिच। चितिरियं कुलटोव वहुप्रिया हतशरीरमिदञ्च विनस्मर। सुकृत सद्य न चेत् क्रियते ध्रुवं वियदि वच्यति वोनुस्तू?यानलः॥ इति कमलदलाम्बुविन्दुलोलाः श्रिय-मनुचिन्त्य मनुष्यजीवितञ्च। सकलमिदं म्टदाङ्कतं (मदान्धतां?) हि बुद्धाः न हि पुरुषैः परकीर्त्तयो विलोप्याः॥ ०॥ सम्बत् लू (६५?) ब्सा शुभ सुदिन।

Translation of Ranabhanja Deva's Grant.

"Be it so. May Bhava, the lord of Bhavání, sole sovereign of all the worlds, dispeller of worldly fears, conversant with the various rules of *Samádhi*, the omniscient, be to your prosperity.

"In the great forest of devotion (*tapovana*) with its ten millions of hermitages, there was a ruler of men, named Vírabhadra the holder of the sceptre, which had pricked the pea-hen's egg, was proficient in destroying (his) adversaries, the protected of the sage Vasishṭha.

"At the commencement of the dynasty of the Bhanjas, (there) was born (to him) a son, Srí Koṭhya Bhanja by name, (who proved) a conflagration to the wilderness of (his) foes, a renowned hero, intelligent, pure, courteous, eminent like his sire, fortunate and lording over innumerable chiefs, homaged by hundreds, ruler of people, surnamed Sri Digbhanja (subduer of all quarters).

"His son the prosperous Raṇabhanja Deva, mighty as Káma (cupid), most exalted, heroic, of full and towering fame (and) victorious over (his) enemies, like king Yudhishthira ever devoted to the good government of (his) country, and fully efficient in (the promotion) of good measures and deeds, of the earth-conquering race, resident of Koṭṭa, whose sins have been absolved by worshipping the feet of Hara, declares greeting, to the princes of the earth-conquering race.

"Bounded by the suburbs of the northern division, are the states named Korandiyá and the Devakunda, appertaining to which are the villages of Timaṇḍirá, Konkola, Jambupadraka (and) Prasanná. These villages thus named up to their boundaries on four sides (with) their *lawful* (?) entrance, quarries and mines, free of encumbrances I give to Boḍháka Sámanta, son of Muṇḍi, on seeing his proper conduct, with this edict which must be observed by you, princes of the earth-conquering race, so long as (there would be) men of virtue and politeness on earth. So it is said in the Dharma Sastra. Lands have been given (in donation) by several princes commencing from Sagara, whosesoever is the land for any time his and even his is the produce (thereof) for the time being. Whenever any one is the occupant of any land, he has the usufruct thereof for the time. But seeing these gifts made by your predecessors, ye princes, be not apprehensive of the diminution of your power (demerit). (For) the observance of another's grant is more meritorious and is fraught with greater merit than a gift by one's self. Whoever resumes a land given either by himself or another, rots with his ancestors in filth in the form of maggots. Moreover this earth like a harlot is a mistress to many; while this mortal frame is frail and fragile, unless one betimes practices virtues he will have to upheave sighs of fire (remorse) to the heavens. Knowing fortune to be as unsteady as the dew-drop on the lotus leaf, and life as brief, and seeing how every earthly thing moulders away, let none wipe away another's fame."

The inscription of Sri Rájabhanja Deva is a little larger than the first. It is peculiar as it bears no date.

The inscription transliterated stands thus :

श्रीराजभञ्जदेवस्य।

स्वस्ति। सकलभुवनैकनाथो भवभयभिदुरो भवो भवानीशः॥ विविधसमाधिविधिज्ञः सर्व्वज्ञोवः शिवायास्तुः॥ आशीत् कोट्याश्रम महातपोवनाधिष्ठाने मायुराण्डं भित्वा शर्ण्णदण्ड वीरभद्राख्यः प्रतिपक्ष निधनदक्षो वशिष्ठमुनिपालितो न्टपति॥ तस्यादिभञ्जवंशे रिपुवनदावानल ख्यातः। सूरस्शुचिर्व्विनीतोजातः श्रीकोट्ट?भञ्ज पुत्रस्तदानुरूप श्रेष्ठ श्रीमान्नसङ्घसामन्ता न्टपति शतार्च्चितचरणौ श्रीरणभञ्जो जगत्प्रथितः (जश अन्नितः?) तस्यात्मजः स्मरसमो वलवांवरिष्ठ सूर समुन्नत यसा प्रविजित्य शत्रु राजा युधिष्ठिररिवावनिपालने च नित्यं रतः कुशल कर्म्म विधौ प्रशस्तः।————कोट्यवासी हरचरणाराधन क्षयित पापः श्रीमा(न्)राजभञ्जदेवः सानुनय प्राह॥ भूपाला खिञ्जिद्दंशप्रतिवद्धो उत्तरखण्डस्यान्तपाति ब्राह्मणवस्ति विषय संमन्ध ब्राह्मणवस्तिनाम्ना ग्रामाभिधानो ग्रामोयं पूर्व्वविदित सीमान्तः महासामन्तवुट्टानाम्ना मुण्डि सामन्तसुतस्य विधेयी दृष्ट्वा ताम्र शासनीकृत्याकरत्वेन च सर्व्ववाधा विवर्ज्जितेन प्रदत्तार(?)स्माभिः। यावत् पृथ्वी धर्म्मदाच्छिण्यलोका तावत्कालपालनीयो भवद्भिः॥ उक्तञ्च धर्म्मशास्त्रे वङ्भिर्व्वसुधादत्ता राजभिः सगरादिभि र्यस्य यस्य यदा भुमीं तस्य तस्य तदा फलमाक्षयः। फलशंकावः परदत्तेतिपार्थिवा। स्वदत्त फलमानन्त परदत्तानुपालने॥ स्वदत्ता परदत्ताम्बायोहरेतिवसुन्धरां। सविष्ठाया क्रमिभूत्वा पितृभिः सह पच्यते॥ अपिच। क्षितिरियं कुलटेव वङ्पृथा हतशरीरमिदञ्च विनस्मर। सुकृत महानचेत क्षयते ध्रुवं विपदिदन्द जिवानुषयानलः॥ इति कमलदलाम्बुविन्दुलोला श्रिय मनुचिन्त्य मनुष्य जीवितञ्च। सकलमिदमदान्धतां हि वुध्वा नहि पुरुषैः परकीत्तयो विलोप्याः॥ ०॥

Sri Rájábhanja Devá's (grant).

"Be it so! May Bhava the lord of Bhaváni, sole sovereign of all the worlds, dispeller of worldly fears, conversant with the rights of various *samádhi* and omniscient, be for your prosperity.

"In the site of the vast forest of religious austerities and millions of hermitages, there was a ruler of men, Virabhadra by name, the subverter of the Mayura dynasty, who being protected by the sage

Vashishtha, his priest, was competent to destroy his adversaries with his picked sceptre.

In the commencement of the dynasty of the Bhanja, (there) was born (to him) a son, the prosperous Kotta, who was a conflagration in the wilderness of his foes, a hero, pure and courteous (in his manner). Equally eminent and prosperous (with his sire), while a hundred chiefs and rulers of men paid homage to his feet, was Sri Ranabhanja, of world-wide fame. His son, the prosperous, Rájabhanja Deva, of the earth-conquering race inhabiting Kotta, who is a cupid (in comeliness) and strength, supereminent, heroic and of exalted renown, victorious over his enemies and like the king Yudhishthira ever attentive to the government of his realm, and intent on his duties in works of peace, being absolved from all his sins by his devotion at the feet of Hara, says greeting to the princes of the earth-conquering race.

Bounded by the suburbs of the northern divisions and appertaining to the estate of Brahmanvasati is the village denominated Brahmanavasati (also); this village as far as its boundaries are hitherto known bestowed by us (in gift) for his merit to the generalissimo named Buddha, son of Mundi Sámanta, free of all rents and incumbrances and by means of this copper plate edict. So long as there are virtuous men on earth, this must be observed by you, princes of the earth-conquering race. It is said in the codes of legislation, lands have been given by many a prince commencing from Sagara; whosoever is the possessor of the land, his and only his is the fruit thereof. Ye princes, be not suspicious as to your demerit; for endless is the reward which alike befits him who grants and who observes the gifts. Whoever resumes a land given either by himself or another (in gift), rots with his ancestors in filth in the form of maggots. Moreover this earth as a harlot is a mistress to many, while this mortal frame is frail and fragile, unless one betimes practises virtues, he must utter *igneous?* sighs of repentance to the heavens. Unsteady as the dew drop on the lotus leaf, know thus thy fortune to be fickle and thy life as brief. Seeing how every earthly thing moulders away, let none wipe away another's reputation.